



CITY OF AKRON, OHIO
POLICE DIVISION
JAMES D. NICE, CHIEF OF POLICE

NUMBER P-2011-067	EFFECTIVE DATE September 1, 2011	RESCINDS P-09-067 Issued 6-5-09
SUBJECT Police-Media Relations Procedure		ISSUING AUTHORITY Chief James D. Nice

I. POLICY

The Akron Police Department will cooperate with authorized news media representatives in their efforts to gather factual, public information pertinent to activities of the department, as long as these activities do not unduly interfere with departmental operation, infringe upon individual rights or violate the law. Consideration must also be given to the possible effect that may result when untimely data is released that may put a person in jeopardy or compromise a criminal investigation. Providing information on department administration and operation will help foster a relationship of mutual trust and cooperation.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Public information – Information regarding policies, procedures, or events involving the department or other newsworthy information that is not legally protected, does not interfere with the mission of the department, infringe upon the rights of a defendant or compromise the legitimate safety and privacy interests of officers, victims, witnesses, or others.
- B. Media – Those individuals functioning as reporters, photographers, camera persons, or similar employees of organizations such as newspapers, broadcasters, wire services, and magazines which regularly disseminate information.

III. PROCEDURE

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Authorized media representatives shall have reasonable access to the Akron Police Department, the Chief of Police or his designee, and operations of the department. When information must be denied to a media representative, the legal authority for the denial shall be explained.
2. This department recognizes authorized identification from all local, national, and international news organizations. Failure of media personnel to present authorized identification may provide grounds for restricting access to requested information or to incident scenes.
3. Public information shall be released to the media as promptly as circumstances allow.

4. Media access on private property requires the authorization of the officer in charge and the permission of the owner.¹
5. Suspects or accused persons in custody shall not be posed or arrangements made for photographs, telecasts, or interviews, nor shall departmental personnel pose with suspects or accused persons in custody.
6. Incident reports will be made available on a routine basis to media representatives unless such information is an exception to the Public Records Law.²
7. Requests for records by media representatives shall be made to the Record Room or Police Information Officer (PIO) and disclosed as permitted by the Public Records Law.
8. Public information may be provided to media representatives by telephone if the identity of the representative is known or can be authenticated.

B. OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Do not allow the media to enter the premises of another when a search is being conducted, either with or without a warrant. In those cases where the media does accompany police personnel on raids or other law enforcement activity, officers must ensure that the media does not go beyond areas accessible to the general public.
2. The media shall not be allowed access to any area where there is a possibility that evidence may be damaged, altered, destroyed, or otherwise compromised by being published or portrayed.

C. SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Supervisors on scene may release information of a factual nature to the media as governed by this policy. Where any authorized officer is unsure of the facts or the propriety of releasing information, he shall refer the inquiry to his shift commander. Any information released to the media will be communicated to the PIO.
2. A supervisor shall inform the shift commander as soon as possible upon receipt of information about events or activities that may have media interest.
3. When the media is accompanying Akron Police Department personnel on any type of operation, the supervisor in charge shall communicate the rules governed by this procedure in advance.
4. At the scene of major crimes, the supervisor in charge shall designate a preliminary press area as early as possible and as close to the scene as safety and operational requirements allow. In addition, the supervisor in charge will periodically give press releases and news briefings when a PIO is not available.

D. POLICE INFORMATION OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Written press statements shall only be released following approval of the Chief of Police or a subdivision commander.
2. When an adult is charged with a criminal offense, photographs or mug shots may be released to the media.

E. DETECTIVE BUREAU DESK RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Public information may be provided to media representatives by telephone if the identity of the representative is known or can be authenticated.
2. Any information released to the media will be communicated to the PIO.

By Order Of,



James D. Nice
Chief of Police

Date August 16, 2011

¹ Wilson vs. Layne, 526US603 (1999)

² Ohio Revised Code Chapter 149